



Town of West Newbury
Select Board
Monday, July 25, 2022 7:00pm
381 Main Street, Town Office Building
www.wnewbury.org
Open Session Meeting Minutes

Open Session: The meeting was called to order at 7:07pm by Chairperson Archibald.

Participation at the Meeting:

Richard Parker, David Archibald, and Wendy Reed *Select Board Members*
Angus Jennings, *Town Manager*
James Blatchford, *Town Clerk*
Lenny Mirra, *State Representative*
Bruce Tarr, *Massachusetts Senator*
Dick Cushing
Bob Janes, *Board of Water Commissioners Chairperson*
Michael Dacey
David Parrott

Announcements:

- This meeting is being broadcast on local cable TV and recorded for rebroadcast on the local cable channels and on the internet. Meeting also accessible by remote participation; see agenda for details.
- Purple Heart Community ceremony – Sunday, August 7 at 1pm, Bandstand (rain/heat location: Annex) See pages 2-3 for details.
- Recent Grand Opening of CPA-funded Page School Playground - Now Open for Play! See pages 4-5 for details. Chairperson Archibald thanked all parties involved with this project.
- 2022 Summer Bandstand Concert Schedule– Thursdays through Aug. 25th, at 6:30pm: list of performers online! See pages 6-7 for details.
- Call for volunteers! Open positions on Boards/Commissions/Committees. See www.wnewbury.org/volunteer
- Reminder to subscribe for emailed Town news/announcements at <https://www.wnewbury.org/subscribe>

Regular Business

A. Update regarding Rocks Village Bridge – Rep. Lenny Mirra

Senator Bruce Tarr and Representative Lenny Mirra appeared before the Select Board in person (see exhibit A pages 8-10 for details). Representative Mirra stated they had attended a zoom meeting between Haverhill Representative Andy Vargas, residents of Rocks Village, members of the Rocks Village Historical Commission, and members of MassDOT that took place the week prior. At the zoom meeting, the group discussed the difficulty of gaining approval from the state to place a permanent truck restriction on the bridge. Truck routes would need to be diverted to other bridges and those routes would require approval from neighboring communities.

Senator Tarr stated that better warning systems would have a greater chance of approval and efforts should be shifted towards protecting the bridge in that manner. Tarr reported that installation of a sacrificial strike bar was discussed, but the Rocks Village Historical Commission would need to approve any change to the bridge and issue a certificate of appropriateness prior to the installation. The Select Board, Tarr, and Mirra discussed who had jurisdiction over the bridge and if the jurisdiction encompassed the entire bridge. Discussion continued as to what other warning systems could be utilized to prevent future incidents. Tarr suggested scheduling a meeting with all involved parties to discuss options surrounding potential upgrades in warning signage and/or other warning systems.

Dick Cushing appeared before the Select Board and addressed Senator Tarr and Representative Mirra concerning the sidewalk and crosswalk at the post office. This topic was briefly discussed and Senator Tarr suggested advanced signage to warn motorists to slow down. **No motion was made at this time.**

B. Notice of Standard & Poor's upgrade of West Newbury to AAA bond rating

Jennings reviewed the upgrade from AA+ to a AAA bond rating (see exhibit B pages 11-18 for details). Jennings stated the adoption and adherence of formal financial policies, the capital planning program, and the attention the town had given to resiliency planning contributed to the upgrade of the bond rating. **No motion was made at this time.**

C. Requests for appointment

Jennings stated the applicant for item Ca was unable to attend the meeting. It was decided to take items Cb and Cc first as the applicants for these items were in attendance.

b. Michael Dacey to Climate Change Resiliency Committee

Michael Dacey appeared before the Select Board (see exhibit C page 20 for details). Dacey, a professional geologist, discussed prior experience with coastal erosion and spoke of the familiarity with the

committee due to attending several of the meetings. **Parker made a motion to appoint Michael Dacey to the Climate Change Resiliency Committee through June 30, 2023. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

c. David Parrott to Open Space Committee

David Parrott appeared before the Select Board (see exhibit C page 21 for details). Parrot, a member of the Conservation Commission, would serve as the Commission's representative on the Open Space Committee if appointed. **Reed made a motion to appoint David Parrott to the Open Space Committee as an Associate Member through June 30, 2023. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

a. Karen Holmes to Affordable Housing Trust (see exhibit C page 19 for details)

The Select Board discussed the application for appointment. **Reed made a motion to appoint Karen Holmes to the Affordable Housing Trust through June 30, 2022. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

Archibald nominated Wendy Reed to be the Select Board Member on the Affordable Housing Trust. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 2, No 0, Abstain 1).

It was decided to take item G followed by item H out of order at this time.

G. Updates regarding Soldiers & Sailors building

A summary of the working group meeting comprised of Jennings, Reed, the Town Planner, and Ray Cook was discussed. Jennings stated this working group believed the zoning for the building could be rectified three different ways. The first option was to rezone the parcel of land with stand-alone business zoning. The second option was to include "office space" to the list of specified uses on a special permit. The third option was to request a finding from the Zoning Board to allow the Planning Board to consider issuing a special permit for a non-specified use. The Select Board discussed the options, which option would offer a potential buyer the most assurance the zoning would be successful, and how including office space as a specified use to a special permit could impact other parts of town.

Dick Cushing appeared before the Select Board with concerns surrounding the exterior preservation of the building. Reed stated a historic preservation restriction would be in place to ensure the exterior of the building would not change. The Select Board continued to discuss the current zoning and how to amend the zoning in order to narrow down what uses would be allowed. **Parker made a motion to ask the Planning Board to begin the process of a zoning amendment to allow office use of a limited size within the residential C district. Reed seconded.** Jennings stated the draft to begin the preservation guidelines had been received. It was decided to refer the historical guidelines to the Historical Commission for review. **Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

H. Discussion of water/potential for study of regional opportunities

The Select Board discussed the shortage in staff in the Water Department and whether the town should look into forging a partnership with a neighboring community or hire a private company to help. Bob Janes, Board of Water Commissioners Chairperson, appeared before the Select Board. Janes requested a list of questions/concerns for the Board of Water Commissioners to discuss and address at the next Commission meeting. Janes briefly discussed the applications received to date and stated that hiring a private company would come with a pricey cost. The Select Board and Janes discussed the lack of a formal agreement with Newburyport to provide water to the town and discussed if getting water from Newburyport would be the best option for the long term. Lastly, the possibility of forming a partnership with Groveland to "share" water department staff was discussed. The Select Board stated the formal agreement between the towns for the Animal Control Officer had been successful, and wondered if a similar agreement could be beneficial for both towns. **No motion was made at this time.**

D. Review of Election calendar; Approval of election warrant; Approval of election workers and constables

Blatchford gave a brief summary of the election schedule August 23, 2022-September 6, 2022 (see exhibit D pages 22-25 for details). It was stated early voting would be offered from 9am-4pm August 27-September 2 in the Annex with a late night for early voting August 30th from 3pm-7pm at the library. Blatchford requested a vote of approval for the election warrant and a vote of approval for the list of election workers/constables working the polls. Blatchford stated a training session for election workers would take place August 23, 2022 and would be scheduled before each election going forward. Jennings reviewed edits to be made on the warrant. **Parker made a motion to appoint the slate as presented in the packet. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0). Reed made a motion to approve the warrant as revised. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

E. Discussion of COVID protocols, and whether time lost due to COVID-19 will count as sick time

Jennings reviewed the COVID protocols and asked how the Board would like to proceed with employee

time lost due to COVID-19 (see exhibit E pages 26-33 for details). Jennings stated a remote work agreement had been put in place with a number of employees and discussed the benefit of expanding the agreement to all employees where remote work could be completed. The Select Board discussed the current CDC guidelines and how long the COVID-19 policy should be extended. After discussion, it was decided to restore the COVID-19 policy for half a year and to continue to follow the CDC guidelines. **Reed made a motion to extend the date of the COVID-19 protocol to December 31, 2022. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

F. Cont'd discussion of date options for Fall 2022 Special Town Meeting; Set date for close of Fall Special Town Meeting warrant

Jennings recommended to schedule the closing of the warrant for August 29, 2022 in order for the Finance Committee booklet to be completed 14 days in advance of the Fall Special Town Meeting. The Select Board discussed the timeframe the Boards, Committees, and Departments would have to complete proposal articles if the warrant closed on August 29, 2022. **Reed made a motion to close the warrant for the Fall Town Meeting August 29, 2022. Parker seconded.** Jennings stated a time of closure did not need to be included in the motion. **Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

The Select Board discussed the proposed dates for the Town Meeting. **Archibald made a motion to hold the Town Meeting Monday, October 24, 2022. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).** Jennings suggested placing a hold on the Pentucket Auditorium in the event the Annex was not an appropriate choice to hold the meeting.

I. Discussion of potential next steps from recent Page/Pipestave/Rte 113 safety audit, and potential to pursue Safe Routes to Schools grant

Jennings asked if the Select Board would like to include an article on the Fall Special Town Meeting to fund the preparation of the grant (see exhibit I pages 34-38 for details). Jennings stated the Principal of Page School and the Superintendent had agreed the larger project involving the crosswalk should be sought for under the Safe Routes to School Grant instead of an interior renovation that had been envisioned the prior year. The Select Board discussed the report received from the consultant with the inclusion of bike lanes that had not previously been discussed. Reed suggested placing an article on the warrant with the option of removing it if they chose to do so. **No motion was made at this time.**

J. Sample report from another town's review of public land for feasibility for ground-mounted solar

Parker stated the monetary numbers included in the sample report would be different as the prices have decreased on a number of materials that would be used (see exhibit J pages 39-66 for details) and discussed adding the Pentucket School parking lot as a potential location on the feasibility study. The Select Board and Jennings discussed how the parking lot was not owned solely by the town and was not within the scope of the article approved at the Spring Town Meeting. It was stated that the location, if included in the feasibility study, would need to be paid for out of a separate budget. The Select Board the discussed if the DPW roof could be included in the feasibility study as a potential location. Parker briefly discussed completing an energy use profile for the Town Offices Building. This study would run the course of a year and measure the amount of energy the offices require to operate. **No motion was made at this time.**

K. Designate Board representative to attend regional meeting to review Pentucket Regional Agreement

Jennings stated the meeting would be comprised of the core group specified in the original agreement, as well as, designees from each of the town Select Boards, Finance Committees, and School Committees (see exhibit K pages 67-77 for details). **Reed made a motion for Archibald to be the Select Board Representative for the meeting. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

L. Meeting minutes: March 14, 2022; June 27, 2022

Parker made a motion to approve the minutes. Two clerical errors were brought forward (see exhibit L pages 78-87 for details). The Select Board discussed the suggestion noted in the June 27th minutes to modify the Harbor Committee Bylaw. **Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).** The Select Board briefly discussed the land that was donated to the town that was discussed at a previous meeting. Jennings stated information regarding the next steps would be forwarded for the Select Board for review.

Town Manager Updates

M. Preliminary update re FY22 year-end expense and revenue numbers (actual v. budgeted)

Jennings presented the snapshot of the FY22 year-end expense and revenue numbers (see exhibit M pages 88-97 for details). The Select Board reviewed pages 95-97 and discussed the local receipts overage. Jennings explained a 5-yr rolling average is used to determine the projection, and 90% of that is listed to reflect a more conservative number. **No motion was made at this time.**

N. Update on Water Dept. work toward filing for State Revolving Fund (SRF) funding for Prospect/Church Street water main replacements

Jennings gave an update on the SRF filing and informed the Select Board of the submission deadline of August 12, 2022. Jennings discussed the benefits of filing for the State Revolving Fund. **No motion was made at this time.**

O. River Access Committee eligibility application to Community Preservation Committee

Jennings stated the Community Preservation Committee voted that the River Access Committee project was eligible for funding (see exhibit O pages 98-124 for details). The application would be heard by the CPC at the public meeting August 18, 2022. **No motion was made at this time.**

P. Updates regarding Middle Street Bridge

Jennings briefly reviewed the denial of request for minor project modification from the Department of Environmental Protection (see exhibit P page 125 for details). **No motion was made at this time.**

Q. Recap of recent meeting regarding Mill Pond All Access Trail conceptual design process

Archibald reiterated that phase one of the design plan would update the lower parking lot for accessibility and focus on the all-access trail. Phase two, which would take place at a different time, would involve additional parking on the upper portion of the site. **No motion was made at this time.**

R. Update on status of The Collins Center employee wage & classification study

Jennings informed the Select Board the drafted job descriptions had been received as well as the raw data concerning the current wage market. **No motion was made at this time.**

S. Mailing of affordable housing monitoring letters for Local Action Units under Local Initiative Program

Jennings stated the letters had been mailed out by his office in July and would continue to be mailed out annually. **No motion was made at this time.**

T. Follow up meeting assignment; placing items for future agendas

The Select Board discussed the submitted grant application for the MBTA housing. Jennings stated a response was not expected until October. The Select Board and Jennings discussed the timeframes surrounding the MBTA housing and the difficulties many small communities will face for this initiative.

Archibald made a motion to adjourn. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0). Open Session adjourned at 10:42pm.